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423 prominent trees on the boundary lines, or by natural boundaries such as streams.

423 614 In the War country to the West of Cherra, notably the country between the heights of Laitkynsew and the plains, considerable portions of the hill-sides are the property of communities known as *sengs*. A *seng* may be defined as a collection of families sprung from some common ancestress or ancestor. As an instance of these *sengs* I may describe the community known as the *lai seng* which owns land in the neighbourhood of Laitkynsew, the area owned being known as the "*ri lai seng*," or land of the three clans. These clans are descended from three men, U Kynta, U Nabein, and U Tangrai, it being remarkable that in this case descent is traced originally from male ancestors and not from females. The three aneestors are said to have owned a large tract of land, and they had as their abode the village of Laitmawria close to Laitkynsew; but owing to an epidemic, or some such cause, they deserted the village of Laitmawria and went with their families to live in some of the surrounding War villages, viz. in Tyrna, Nongkroh, Nongwar, Mastoh, and Mawlong. The descendants of the three men above-mentioned possess a genealogical table, showing their descent from the original three founders of the *sengs*. They claim a large tract of country lying to the south and south-east of the Laitkynsew plateau, containing not only orange gardens, but also valuable lime quarries. There are other *seng* communities also in the neighbourhood, e.g. the *hinriew phew seng*, or sixty *sengs*, who put forward claims to other tracts of land. The boundaries of the *ri lai seng* are identifiable on the ground. [622] The business of the *seng* community is managed by a durbar, an elder or other influential person being chosen as president.

423 [427] 692 In the country of the Lynngams the crop belongs to the person who cultivates it, but the land belongs to the *kur* or family. The Lynngam villages, like those in the Khasi Siemships, do not pay any rent to the Siem. If outsiders cultivate within the areas set apart for the different Lynngam villages, all of them, including women, have to pay eight annas each to the people of the village in whose circle they cultivate. There is usually a mutual understanding between inhabitants of Lynngam villages, that certain tracts of land belong to the

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respective villages; sometimes, however, there are disputes regarding those lands between the different villages. Such disputes are settled by the Lynngam Sirdars of villages or by the Sirdars sitting with the two Lyngskors of the Siemship. If the disputes cannot be settled by these officials to the satisfaction of the parties, the latter are taken by the Lyngskors and Sirdars to the Siem of Nongstoin, who tries the case with the aid of the State mantris.

LAWS REGARDING OTHER PROPERTY.

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There is no separate law applying to personal property, as opposed to real property, amongst the Khasis.

DECISION OF DISPUTES.

Khasi Courts of Judicature.

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In the first place a complaint is made before the Siem, or chief, against a certain party or parties. The facts and circumstances of the case are then detailed before the chief and his headmen, the ostensible object being to attempt to bring about a compromise between the parties. If no reconciliation can be effected, a crier (*u nong pyrta shnong*), or in the Jaintia Hills a *sangot*, is sent out to proclaim at the top of his voice the durbar which is to assemble the following evening. He proceeds to cry the durbar in the evening when all the inhabitants have returned to the village from their usual daily pursuits. With a loud premonitory yell the crier makes use of the following formula *:—

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"*Kaw!* thou, a fellow-villager; thou, a fellow-creature; thou, an old man; thou, who art grown up; thou, who art young; thou, a boy; thou, a child; thou, an infant; thou, who art little; thou, who art great. *Hei!* because there is a contest. *Hei!* for to cause to sit together. *Hei!* for to cause to deliberate. *Hei!* for to give intelligence together. *Hei!* about to assemble in durbar. *Hei!* for to listen attentively. *Hei!* ye are forbidden. *Hei!* ye are stopped to draw water then

* What follows is a literal translation of the Khasi.

241 464 2.10 **Labour and Wages:** It has already been mentioned above that a large number of people subsist on labour—agricultural as well as non-agricultural. Owners of big orchards employ labourers for clearing of their orchards twice or thrice a year, plucking and transporting of produce to markets. Paddy cultivators with large farm engage labourers for ploughing and hoeing of fields, sowing, harvesting and threshing of paddy. It should be mentioned that due to the peculiar agricultural practices prevalent in the district, the input of labourer even for paddy cultivation is higher than that in any of the plains district of the State, which compels cultivators to hire labourer even for small paddy fields. In the case of cash crops, wages are usually paid in cash and for food crops it is paid in cash and kind more usually in kind. Wage rates for males and females are different which generally vary from Rs.1.50 to 1.25 for males and Rs.1.25 to Re. 1.00 for females.

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There are, however, numerous instances of engaging agricultural labourers at the rate of Re. 0.50 per day. During the scarcity months the well-to-do farmers advance loans to the poorer section of the people on condition that repayment will have to be made by rendering labour on wage basis at the rate of Re. 0.50 per day in the creditors farms whenever their services are demanded. Thus whenever their services are demanded the poor people have to work in creditor's farm even at the cost of ruining their own cultivation.

There are other instances where the labourers are paid less then usual wages. In some villages where there is dearth of work all the agricultural labourers gather together at some specified place early in the morning. The well-to-do farmers go there and through bargaining manage to engage the number of hands they want at very low rates Similar bidding down of wages of non-agricultural labourers is also prevalent whenever demand for labour is very low.

Land utilisation and cropping

423 659 2.11 **Land tenure system.**—The district of United K. J. Hills is not cadastrally surveyed and so far as land tenure is concerned, there is no rigid unifrom or regular system worth the name, with the exception of those lands under the control of the State Forest Department and the Local District Council. There are different kinds of land under different systems, though for obvious reasons no reliabe statistics can be gathered in respect of them. As far as land tenure system is concerned, Jowai subdivision is conspicuously different from Shillong subdivision. However, land in the whole district can be broadly placed under the following categories:—

423 [692] [651] I. **Rikynti or Private land.**—They are private land belonging to certain clans or families but not to an individual according to Khasi custom. Neither Syiem nor District Council has got any power over them except the judicial powers to settle any dispute that may arise over any plot of land. The only connection is with the State Forests Department in respect of private protected forests who collects royalty from the produces of these forests if they are used for purposes of

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648 631 States in the Khásí Hills; and the Jáintiá Hill country, which is wholly British. The British possessions are administered under a code specially introduced for the purpose. The Khási dependent States consist of petty democracies, presided over by chiefs called Siems, who, though taken from one family, are appointed by election; or by head-men, such as Wáhadádárs, Sardárs, and Lyngdohs, whose offices are absolutely elective. The appointment of all these chiefs and head-men is subject to the confirmation of the British Government, which also reserves to itself the right to remove them in case of misconduct.

The British possessions in the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills, which cover an aggregate area of 2160 square miles, consist of the following Fiscal Divisions:—In the Khásí Hills—(1) Jim-mang; (2) Láit-lyn-kot; (3) Láit-kroh; (4) Bái-rang, otherwise Wáh-long; (5) Long-ká-ding; (6) Máo-be-lár-kár; (7) Máo-smái; (8) Mynteng; (9) Máo-mlúh; (10) Máo-pun-kyr-tiang; (11) Nong-jírí; (12) Nong-lyng-kin; (13) Nong-bah; (14) Nong-riát; (15) Nong-kroh; (16) Nun-niah; (17) Rám-dáit; (18) Sáit-soh-pen; (19) Tyng-riang; (20) Tyng-rong; (21) Tyr-ná; (22) Um-niuh; (23) Mar-bisu (dependency); and (24) U Ttymá. In the Jáintiá Hills—(1) Am-wi; (2) Chap-duk (Kuki); (3) Dar-rang; (4) Jowái; (5) Lang-flút; (6) Lang-soh; (7) Lá-ká-dong; (8) Myn-riang (Mikír); (9) Mul-shoi (Kuki); (10) Más-kút; (11) Myn-sáo; (12) Nong-klih; (13) Nong-fúlút; (14) Nong-thá-long; (15) Nar-pú; (16) Nar-tiang; (17) Nong-bah; (18) Nong-jyngi; (19) Kal-liang; (20) Rým-bái; (21) Sái-pung (Kuki); (22) Soh-tyn-gah; (23) Shiliang-myn-tang; (24) Sáth-pathor; and (25) Shang-púng.

The Khásí democratic States, covering an aggregate area of 3997 square miles (in some reports stated at 4490 square miles), are as follow:—Presided over by Siems—(1) Bhawál, otherwise War-bah; (2) Cherrá; (3) Khyrim; (4) Lyng-kin; (5) Malái-soh-mat; (6) Mahárám; (7) Máriao; (8) Máo-iong; (9) Máo-syn-rám; (10) Myl-liem; (11) Nong-soh-phoh; (12) Nong-klao; (13) Nongs-pung; (14) Nong-stain; and (15) Rám-brái. Presided over by Wáhadádárs—(1) The Confederacy of Shellá. Presided over by Sardárs—(1) Dwárá Nong-tyr-men; (2) Ji-rang; (3) Máolong; (4) Máo-don; and (5) Nong-long. Presided over by Lyngdohs—(1) Lyn-iong; (2) Máo-flang; (3) Nong-lywái; and (4) Soh-iong.

648 • 692 The administration in the Khásí States gives to the native Chiefs independent jurisdiction in all cases, civil or criminal (except

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homicide), in which their own subjects are concerned. All cases of homicide, or matters involving disputes between people belonging to different States, are adjudicated upon by the British officers of the District.

In the British possessions, the principal sources of revenue are rents and royalties derived from mineral workings, such as lime and coal; rents of fisheries; and a house tax, which varies, according to situation and productiveness of the soil, from R. 1 to Rs. 2 or from 2s. to 4s. per house. A land tax is only levied in tracts where the Government possesses the actual proprietary right in the soil. Again, in the Khási States, the British Government, which undertakes the management of the natural products of the country, such as waste lands, coal, lime, etc., receives a half-share of the rents realized from these sources, the other half belonging to the native Chiefs. The other sources of revenue of the Chiefs are market dues, cesses levied occasionally for State purposes, and fines realized in the administration of justice.

HISTORY.—Our first knowledge of the Khási Hills dates from the time when the East India Company acquired the *diwání* of Bengal in 1765. The adjoining District of Sylhet was included in that grant; but as the hillmen had never acknowledged any subjection to the Muhammadans, so they still remained absolutely independent of the British power. However, the necessities of commerce, arising from their monopoly of the lime quarries, from which Bengal has drawn its supply from time immemorial, soon attracted European enterprise to the country. As stated in the Appendix to the Statistical Account of Sylhet, the control of the profits of the lime trade formed in early times one of the most valuable advantages attaching to the position of the official in charge of that District. It does not appear that any European had been attracted to reside in the Hills before 1826. In that year the Rájá of Nongklao entered into an agreement with certain European British subjects to allow a road to be made across the Hills, to connect the Surmá valley with Assam Proper. These Europeans took up their residence at Nongklao. Misunderstandings unfortunately arose, and, partly by the misconduct of some of their Bengáli followers, the growing discontent and apprehension were fanned into a flame. On 4th April 1829 the Khásiás rose in arms and massacred Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton, together with some sepoys. This led to military operations on the part of the British Government, which

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estates. In addition, there are a few small holdings at Jowái, in the Jáintia Hills, which have been settled, after measurement, under the Assam Settlement Rules for a term of ten years. In 1876-77 the total land revenue amounted to Rs. 223, or £22, 6s., derived from 24 estates. Other small items of revenue are derived from fisheries, forests, stamps, and excise. In 1876-77 the rent of the fishery *mahálls* was Rs. 3321, or £332, 2s.; forests produced Rs. 773, or £77, 6s., of which Rs. 652 represents fees on the exportation of timber from the Khási States to the District of Kámrúp. In the same year stamps yielded Rs. 16,121, or £1612, 2s.; but this total includes the sale of postage and telegraph stamps, as well as the sum credited for service stamps. Excise produced Rs. 1216, or £121, 12s. The stamps are sold at the Treasury; there are no licensed vendors. The excise laws are applied only within the limits of the Stations of Shillong and Cherrá Púnjí, and throughout the Jáintiá Hills. There are no licensed distilleries in the District, and the free manufacture of country spirit is permitted both in the dependent States and in British territory; what is manufactured is mainly for home consumption. In 1876-77 there were in all 18 licenses in force—4 for imported spirituous and fermented liquors, 1 each for *máhúl* and *chandu*, 2 for *ganjá*, and 10 for opium. The Khásiás and Syntengs are not addicted to the use of intoxicating drugs, which is confined to the people from the plains residing on British territory.

COURTS, ETC.—In the year 1835 there were two Magisterial and Civil Courts in the District. By 1850 the number had risen to four, which continues to the present time. The maximum distance of any village from the nearest court is 65 miles, the average distance is 25 miles. In 1835 one European official was permanently stationed in the District; in 1850, two; in 1862 and 1869, again one. In the last-mentioned year the subdivision of Jowái was opened in the Jáintiá Hills; and there have since been two officers in the District, a Deputy-Commissioner at Shillong, and an Assistant at Jowái. The total number of magistrates is three. These figures, of course, are exclusive of the staff of the Local Government, which has been established at Shillong since 1874.

POLICE STATISTICS.—For police purposes, the Khási and Jáintiá Hills are divided into the three following *thánás* or police circles, with two outposts:—(1) Shillong, with an outpost at Nongpoh; (2) Jowái; (3) Cherrá Púnjí, with an outpost at Thária-ghát, at the foot of the southern hills.

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625 In 1835, when British authority was first extended to the Khásí
648 Hills, the cost of maintaining the police, from the rank of *jamádár*
465 or head constable upwards, was £45; and in 1840, £57, 16s. By 1860, when the Jáintiá Hills had been annexed, and a *thánd* opened at Jowái, the cost had risen to £480. In the year 1869 the strength of the regular police was 149 men in the Khásí Hills, and an additional 29 in Jáintiá.

In 1875 the police statistics of the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills were as follow:—The force consisted of 2 inspectors on a salary of upwards of Rs. 100 a month, or £120 a year; 3 sub-inspectors and 13 head constables on a salary of less than Rs. 100 a month; and 113 constables on an average pay of Rs. 9 a month, or £10, 16s. a year. The total pay of subordinate officers amounted to Rs. 8340 or £834 a year; and the total pay of constables to Rs. 12,168 or £1216, 16s. Certain contingencies brought up the aggregate expenses to Rs. 24,969 or £2496, 18s. The total number of men of all ranks was 131. As compared with the area and population of the District, these figures show one man to every 16·49 square miles, or to every 153 persons of the population, maintained at a cost of Rs. 4. 1 or 8s. 1½d. per square mile, and of 2 *dnnás* 10 *pies* or 4½d. per head of population. Of the total force, 1 officer and 13 men were employed to guard the jail, 3 officers and 23 men to guard the treasury and lock-up and to serve as escorts, leaving 14 officers and 77 men available for general duty.

648 Criminal Statistics.—The District of the Khásí and Jáintiá Hills,
• 692 like the other Hill Districts of Assam, is administered by political officers, under special rules framed under Act xxii. of 1869. Petty criminal cases are disposed of by the indigenous magistracy, and only cases of a heinous character are reported to the political officers. Similarly, civil causes are referred to arbitration, according to the indigenous system of village *panchdyats*; and the Deputy-Commissioner reports that this system, while affording equal justice to the people, tends to preserve them from the evil of litigiousness.

674 In 1874 the total number of cases reported by the police to the
178 political officers was 83, as compared with 63 in the previous year. In these 83 cases, 102 persons were arrested, of whom 71 were put on their trial; 61 persons, or 86 per cent., were convicted, and 10 were acquitted.

Though little serious crime exists in the Hills, yet the number of offences shows a tendency towards increase. The Report of the